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1965/02/22

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CMHP09CVV ALA200MJA832
FM RUEKJA
DE RUMJIR 1282A/1 2A/0545Z
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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEKJA/JCS
INFO RUMPA/CINCPAC
RUEHGR/SECSTATE WASHDC
STATE GRNC
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~~SECRET~~ EFTOM OPTNL AUTHY "MEMORIES JCS 4/3
INFO PRIORITY CINCPAC 1641 (EST 2059 FROM SAIGON FEB 22, 1 FI

L I M D I S

REF: JCS 1610012.

THE REF CABLE REQUESTS CINCPAC, MACV AND AMBASSADOR'S VIEWS AS TO REQUIREMENT FOR FORCE DEPLOYMENTS TO THIS AREA IN VIEW OF SECURITY SITUATION OF SVN. GENERAL WESTMORELAND I AGREE THAT THERE IS NO NEED TO CONSIDER DEPLOYMENTS TO SVN AT THIS TIME EXCEPT POSSIBLY FOR PROTECTION OF AERFIELD AT DANANG.

AS I ANALYZE THE PROS AND CONS OF PLACING ANY CONSIDERABLE

NUMBER OF MARINES IN DANANG AREA BEYOND THOSE PRESENTLY ASSIGNED, I DEVELOP GRAVE RESERVATIONS AS TO WISDOM AND NECESSITY OF SO DOING. SUCH ACTION WOULD BE STEP IN REVERSING LONG STANDING POLICY OF AVOIDING COMMITMENT OF GROUND COMBAT FORCES IN SVN.

AC[illegible] J3-6(1-c)

[illegible] ADVANCE COPY DDO

ADDED DIST: 22 FEB 65 J3-1(37) (CAPT MILLER)

ADDED DIST: NMCC/DDO-1 (38) 24 FEB (CAPT ELKINS) NMCC/OCC

EX CY: DJS-1 (39) (THOMPSON) 24 FEB 65. OT
(AGENDA) CJCS-2 (40-41) DJS-4 (42-45) SJCS-2 (46-47) 24 FEB 65. OT

DECLASSIFIED
Authority OSD 11-1-78
By [signature], NARS, Date 3-26-79

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ONCE THIS POLICY IS BREACHED, IT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT TO HOLD LINE. IF DANANG NEEDS BETTER PROTECTION, SO DO BIEN HOA, TON SON NHUT NHA TRANG AND OTHER KEY BASE AREAS. ONCE IT BECOMES EVIDENT THAT WE ARE WILLING ASSUME SUCH NEW RESPONSIBILITIES, ONE MAY BE SURE THAT GVN WILL SEEK TO UNLOAD OTHER GROUND FORCE TASKS UPON US. INCREASED NUMBERS OF GROUND FORCES IN SVN WILL INCREASE POINTS OF FRICTION WITH LOCAL POPULATION AND CREATE CONFLICTS WITH RVNAF OVER COMMAND RELLATIONSHIPS. THESE DISADVANTAGES CAN BE ACCEPTED ONLY IF THERE IS CLEAR AND UNCHALLENGED NEED WHICH CAN BE SATISFIED ONLY BY US GROUND FORCES. TURNING TO POSSIBLE USES FOR ADDITIONAL MARINES IN DANANG AREA, I CAN SEE SEVERAL WHICH ARE WORTH EXAMINING. FIRST, THEY COULD BE USED TO REINFORCE PROTECTION OF DANANG AIR BASE AGAINST BIEN HOA-TYPE OF ATTACK BY FIRE OR AGAINST COMBINED VC FIRE AND GROUND ATTACK.

MORE AMBITIOUS MISSION WOULD BE WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN MOBILE

OPERATIONS AGAINST VC IN DANANG AREA TO KEEP VC UNITS AT DISTANCE FROM BASE AND MAKE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO PACIFICATION OF AREA. SUCH US FORCES WOULD CONCURRENTLY BE AVAILABLE TO JOIN IN CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE OF AREA IF DRV ARMY MOVED SOUTHWARD IN RESUMPTION OF FORMAL HOSTILITIES.

IN DEFENSE OF THE DANANG AIRBASE AGAINST SURPRISE ATTACK BY FIRE, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR MARINES TO BE IN PLACE ON GROUND IN CONSIDERABLE STRENGTH. (MACV HAS ESTIMATED THAT ABOUT SIX BATTALIONS WOULD BE NECESSARY TO KEEP 81MM MORTAR FIRE OFF LARGE AIRFIELD.) EVEN IF WHOLE MEB WERE DEPLOYED, THEY COULD NOT PROVIDE COMPLETE ASSURANCE THAT SURPRISE MORTAR FIRE BY SMALL GROUPS ATTACKING AT NIGHT WOULD BE KEPT OFF FIELD. PROTECTION OF FIELD AGAINST VC GROUND ATTACK WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY SIMPLER AND WOULD REQUIRE FEWER MARINES. IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE AN ATTACK ON FIELD BY MORE THAN VC REGIMENT AND EVEN AN ATTACK IN THOSE NUMBERS WOULD BE EXTREMELY RISKY IN FACE OF SUPERIOR FRIENDLY AIR AND GROUND FIRE. TO MEET SUCH AN ATTACK,

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BATTALION OF MARINES SUPPORTED BY LOCAL ARVN FORCES SHOULD B
SUFFICIENT. ON OTHER HAND, AS INDICATED ABOVE, EFFECTIVE
PERIMETER DEFENSE AGAINST MORTAR FIRE WOULD REQUIRE AT LEAS
WHOLE BRIGADE OF MARINES.
IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT AN ANCILLARY BENEFIT TO DEPLOYMENT
OF ADDITIONAL MARINES TO DANANG WOULD BE FREEING OF ARVN UNIT
FOR USE ELSEWHERE IN MOBILE OPERATIONSS. WHILE SOME ARVN
TROOPS OF ORDER OF BATTALION MIGHT BE SO RELIEVED, NUMBER WOU
NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO CONSTITUTE STRONG ARGUMENT FOR BRINGING
IN MARINES. GENERALLY SPEAKING, MARINES WOULD BE PERFORMING
TASK WHICH HAS NOT BEEN DONE ADEQUATELY IN PAST.

TAYLOR
BT

REF NOT IDENTIFIED (BELIEVE TO BE JCS 5811 DTG 161610Z)

SECTION 1 OF 2 OF 36860

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SEC 2 OF 3 [illegible] 3 6 0

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PP RUEKDA
DE RUMJIR 1252A/2 22/0626Z
P 220506Z ZEA
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEKDA/JCS
INFO RUHPA/CINCPAC
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~~T O P S E C R E T~~ SETWO OFTWO ACTION PRIORITY JCS 473
INFO PRIORITY CINCPAC 1641 DEPT 2699 FROM SAIGON FEB 22, 1 PM

L I M D I S

THE USE OF MARINES IN MOBILE COUNTER-VC OPERATIONS HAS THE ATTRACTION OF GIVING THEM AN OFFENSIVE MISSION AND NNE OF FAR GREATER APPEL THAN THAT OF MERE STATIC DEFENSE. HHOWEVER, IT WOULD RAISE MANY SERIOUS PROBLEMS WHICH IN PAST HAVE APPEARED SUFFICIENTLY FORMIDABLE TO LEAD TO REJECTION OF USE OF US GROUND TROOPS IN A COUNTER-GUERRILLA ROLE. WHITE-FACED SOLDIER ARMED, EQUIPPED AND TRAINED AS HE IS IS NOT SUITABLE GUERRILLA FIGHTER FOR ASIAN FORESTS AND JUNGLES. FRENCH TRIED TO ADAPT THEIR FORCES TO THIS MISSION AND FAILED; I DOUBT THAT US FORCES COULD DO MUCH BETTER. FURTHERMORE, WE WOULD HAVE VASTLY COMPLICATING FACTOR OF NOT RUNNING WAR AND HENCE PROBLEM OF ARRANGING SATISFACTORY COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR VIETNAMESE ALLIES. FINALLY, THERE WOULD BE EVER PRESENT QUESTION OF HOW

ACT.....J3-6(1-6)

CJCS-2(7-8) DJS-3(9-11) SJCS-1(12) J5-2(13-14) SECDEF-5(15-19)

ISA-5(20-24) WHITE HOUSE-3(25-27) CSA-2(28-29) CSAF-2(30-31)

CNO-2(32-33) CMC-2(34-35) FILE-1(36)(36)JCK/M

PAGE 1 OF 2

ADDED DIST: 22 FEB 65 J3-1(37) (CAPT MILLER)

ADDED DIST: NMCC/DDO-1 (38) 24 FEB (CAPT ELKINS, NMCC/OTC)
(AGENDA) CJCS-2 (39-40) DJS-4 (41-44) SJCS-2 (45-46) 24 FEB 65 CT

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FOREIGN SOLDIER WOULD DISTINGUISH BETWEEN A VC AND FRIENDLY VIETNAMESE FARMER. WHEN S VIEW THIS ARRAY OF DIFFICULTIES, I AM CONVINCED THAT WE SHOULD ADHERE TO OUR PAST POLICY OF KEEPING OUR GROUND FORCES OUT OF DIRECT COUNTERINSURGENCY ROLE.

IF THERE WERE ANY GREAT LIKELIHOOD OF DRV FORCES CROSSING YE DEMILITARIZED ZONE IN CONVENTIONAL ATTACK, THERE WOULD BE NO QUESTION OF NEED FOR STRONG US GROUND FORCE TO ASSIST ARVN IN DEFENSE OF COASTAL PLAIN. HOWEVER, THIS SITUTION WOULD NOT ARISE SUDDENLY AND WE SHOULD HAVE AMPLE TIME TO MAKE OUR DEPLOYMENTS BEFORE SITUATION GOT OUT OF HAND.

IN VIEW OF FOREGOING CONSIDERATINS, I CONCLUDE THAT ONLY MISSION WORTH CONSIDERING NOW FOR ADDITIONAL MARINES IN DANANG AREA IS TO CONTRIBUTE TO DEFENSE OF BASE AGAINST MORTAR FIRE AND GROUND ATTACK. HOWEVER, TO DEFEND AGAINST MORTAR FIRE WFN US NOT VC DRV THE NO US ARVN NOT
WOULD REQUIRE AT LEAST FULL BRIGADE AND I DO NOT BELIEVE THREAT AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF MORTAR ATTACK ARE SO GREAT AS TO WARRANT PINNING DOWN SO VALUABLE FORCE IN STATIC DEFENSIVE MISSION. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF GENERAL WESTMORELAND'S UNDERSTANDABLE CONCERN FOR SAFETY OF THIS IMPORTANT BASE, I WOULD BE WILLING TO RECOMMEND PLACING IN DANANG MARINE BATTALION LANDING TEAM. SUCH FORCE WOULD STRENGTHEN DEFENSE OF BASE AND, AT SAME TIME, WOULD BE MANAGEABLE FORCE FROM POINT OF VIEW OF ACCOMMODATING IT ON BASE AND ABSORBING IT INTO DANANG COMMUNITY. SUCH FORCE WITH THOSE MARINES ALREADY PRESENT SHOULD REMOVE ANY SUBSTANTIAL DANGER OF VC GROUND ATTACK AND IN CONJUNCTION WITH AVAILABLE ARVN FORCES PROVIDE AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF SECURITY AGAINST ATTACK BY FIRE.

IF WASHINGTON DECISION IS TO INTRODUCE ADDITIONAL MARINES INTO DIZF
D7G 85 97)S, OF COURSE, BE MADE CONTINGENT UPON GETTING CONCURRENCE OF GVN. IT WOULD BE USEFUL AND, I BELIEVE, NOT DIFFICULT TO GET GVN TO INITIATE REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FORCES TO WHICH USG COULD THEN ACCEDE.
TAYLOR
BT
CFN NOT WESTMORELAND DANANG DANANG VC DANANG GVN NOT GVN USG

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